

2017 Division Chardonnay “Un”

Willamette Valley AVA

2017 did not disappoint when it came to Pacific Northwest weather drama! It is certainly clear that our region, and the world around us, is changing due to manmade global climate change, which will invariably effect the way we farm and even what we farm in the Willamette Valley for decades to come. As with the hot years, the cold years, the dry years and the rainy years, it feels as if we’ve seen it all around here now...well most of it anyways. After an easy 2016 growing season and vintage that pretty much rode the right along the region’s historical averages, in 2017 we returned to the more variable season wine growers in Oregon are most accustomed to.

Cold streaks, rainstorms, drought, heat waves, and wild fires, oh my! While keeping us on our toes at times, especially the wild fires, we persevered right on into late September for what turned out to be a truly graceful, yet powerful vintage for Chardonnay in the Willamette Valley.

We are once again very pleased that our Chardonnay cuvee features the amazing, but very limited old vine fruit from Eola Springs Mendoza clone block. We also continue to work with our favorite Biodynamic site, Johan Vineyards, as well as Methven Family Vineyards in the Eola-Amity Hills. The vintage was perfect for the old vine sites, which sometimes struggle to ripen in cooler years. They were both dense and flavorful, but still nervy and vibrant at the core, not to mention in near perfect health! Furthermore, the two Dijon site really shone this year in a way they had not in very warm previous years.

We utilized the pied de cuve (vineyard native yeast cultivation) build up, a technique that we now use for nearly all of our ferments. The method resulted in fantastic success for the Chardonnay sites this year, which led to a gorgeously complex final wine that did not struggle to complete primary fermentation. The fermentations were long and cool in our first new Austrian oak barrel, several neutral French oak Burgundy barrels, as well as one new French "Aquaflex" barrel, a water bent barrel designed to restrain oak flavor impact without losing valuable tannin and numerous compounds that enhance structure and elegance. The wines completed the secondary malolactic fermentation by early summer of 2018,

The 2017 Chardonnay “Un” is a return to the more acid driven style we love from this glorious grape. The aromatics are a nice balance of orchard fruit such as pear with hints of marzipan. (Think pear almond tart, but not too buttery.) The palate is lively with gorgeous fruit and mineral characteristics and tons of length. The 2017 Chardonnay “Un” is, in our opinion, better balanced, with fresher acidity than the 2014 and 2015 vintages, but with the textural element of barrel fermented Chardonnay. We are pleased with the vintage and believe the wine is both ready to drink, and capable of further development in the near term.

Alc - 13.3%, pH 3.41, 220 cases

